CLAIMS

1. Dispensing apparatus comprising an inlet port for coupling to an opening of a container containing flowable material and an outlet port through which the material is dispensed; the inlet and outlet ports being separated by a conduit; a first one-way valve positioned at the inlet port to permit passage of the flowable material from the container into the conduit, and a second one-way valve positioned at the outlet port to permit passage of the flowable material from the conduit; and means for selectively varying the volume of the conduit between the inlet and outlet ports to pump the flowable material.

2. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the conduit is resiliently deformable.

3. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the respective inlet and outlet ends of the conduit are displaceable relative to each other to selectively vary the volume of the conduit between the inlet and outlet ports.

4. Dispensing apparatus according to any preceding claim, wherein the inlet port is adapted to form a hermetically sealed connection with the opening of the container.

5. Dispensing apparatus according to any preceding claim, wherein a collar for receiving the opening of the container and forming a hermetic seal is mounted on, and surrounds, the inlet port.

6. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the collar is resiliently deformable.

7. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the collar is annular in shape and has a substantially planar upper end surface, a substantially planar lower end surface and substantially cylindrical internal and external surfaces.

8. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein at least part of the internal surface of the resilient collar tapers inwardly from the upper end surface around its entire circumference to form a frusto-conical profile.

9. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 7 or 8, wherein at least one upstanding annular sealing ring extends from the upper end surface.

10. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the or each upstanding annular sealing ring is formed integrally with the resilient collar.

11. Dispensing apparatus according to any of claims 6 to 8, wherein the resilient collar is made from a silicone material.

12. Dispensing apparatus according to any of claims 5 to 11, wherein a substantially rigid housing surrounds the collar and the inlet port.

13. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 12, wherein a radial flange portion projects inwardly from the lower peripheral edge of the housing.

14. Dispensing apparatus according claim 13, wherein the inlet end of the conduit proximate the inlet port is supported on the radial flange.

15. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the inlet port is interposed between the conduit and the collar.

16. Dispensing apparatus according to any of claims 12 to 15, wherein projections are provided on the exterior of the housing, said projections being releasably connectable to a wall-mountable casing such that the dispensing apparatus and the container are locatable within said casing.

17. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein a cradle member is pivotably and releasably mounted on the casing.

18. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein cam surfaces are provided on the cradle member.

19. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 18, wherein cam surface engaging portions are provided on the outlet port.

20. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the cam surface engaging portions are

diametrically opposed projecting pins.

21. Dispensing apparatus according to any of claims 17 to 20, wherein the cradle member has two sidewalls and a supporting surface adapted to receive a toothbrush head.

22. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the supporting surface is provided with a push surface for selective engagement with the distal end of the toothbrush head.

23. Dispensing apparatus according to any preceding claim, wherein the flowable material is semi-solid.

24. Dispensing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the flowable semi-solid material is dentifrice material.

25. Dispensing apparatus according to any preceding claim, wherein the conduit is a bellows pump.

26. Dispensing apparatus according to any preceding claim, wherein the inlet port is perforated.

27. Dispensing apparatus according to any preceding claim, wherein the first one-way valve is an umbrella valve.

28. Dispensing apparatus according to any preceding claim, wherein the second one-way valve is a duckbill valve.

29. A method of dispensing flowable material from a container using the dispensing apparatus according to any of claims 1 to 28, comprising the steps of:

(i) coupling the opening of a container with an inlet port of the dispensing apparatus;

(ii) priming the dispensing apparatus to remove any air within the apparatus or the container by sequentially reducing and increasing the volume between the inlet port and an outlet port in a pumping action; and

(iii) reducing the volume between the inlet and outlet ports to pump the dentifrice material from the container and through a first one-way valve, a conduit and a second one-way valve respectively.

30. A method of dispensing flowable material from a container according to claim 29, wherein the step of reducing the volume between the inlet and outlet ports is achieved by applying a force to compress the conduit longitudinally.

31. A method of dispensing flowable material from a container according to claim 30, wherein the step of applying a longitudinal force is achieved by pivoting a cradle member having cam surfaces about a pivot axis, said cam surfaces moving cam surface engaging portions provided on the outlet port, thus moving the outlet port towards the inlet port.

32. A method of dispensing dentifrice material from a container according to claim 31, wherein the step of pivoting the cradle member is achieved by

positioning a toothbrush head on the cradle member and applying a force in a direction corresponding to the longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.